

Welcome to St. John's:

**Blessing
- of the -
ANIMALS**



**BLESSING OF THE
ANIMALS:**

*Sunday, October 6, 2024
1:00 p.m.*

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
78 Green Hill Road
Washington, CT 06793**

St. John's Church is happy to welcome the Washington community to this service commemorating St. Francis and reminding each of us of the Sovereignty of Almighty God, who is the Creator of all things and the Protector of all life.

A Service for the Blessing of God's Animals, Our Pets and Our Friends

*Commemorating St. Francis of Assisi, Confessor,
Lover of God and of All God's Creatures*

The Bidding Prayer

Officiant: Beloved friends, I bid you welcome in the name of the One who is God almighty, the God of wisdom, loving-kindness, and grace, whose face is known to us all in the wonders of creation. For God, indeed, is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of us and all that is. ***Amen.***

Let us recall the story of God's love in creation, keeping in mind this fragile earth, our island home, which sustains all life. Let us rejoice together in all the creatures of the earth, and especially for our animal companions gathered with us here and at home. ***Amen.***

Finally, let us remember before God all in creation that have no voice and dwell in the wild of the mountains, the seas, the fields, and forests. Let us remember especially all the animals and people who are without homes, the cold, the hungry, and those who are victims of deliberate or thoughtless mistreatment. ***Amen.***

Calling these our prayers to mind, let us pray together to the ruler of all creation, in the words which Jesus of Nazareth has taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Officiant & People: ***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,***

*but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Readings

First Reading: *Excerpts from a letter Attributed to Chief Seattle
to the President of the United States, c. 1852*

Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give the rivers the kindness that you would give any brother.

This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

One thing we know: our God is also your God. The earth is precious to him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted with talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone! Where will the eagle be? Gone! And what is to say goodbye to the swift pony and then hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

The Confession:

Officiant: Let us humbly confess our sins against God, our neighbors, the animal kingdom, and the earth itself:

People: Almighty God, you have given us temporary lordship of your beautiful creation. But we have misused our power, turned away from responsibility and marred your image in us. Forgive us, true Lord, especially for our callousness and cruelty to animals. Help us to follow the way of Jesus of Nazareth, who expressed power in humility and lordship in loving service. Enable us, by your Spirit, to walk in newness of life, healing injury, avoiding wrong and making peace with all your creatures.

Officiants: May Almighty God grant us absolution and remission of all our sins, but also time for true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of God's holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Second Reading: *Genesis 9:8-10, 12-15a, 16-17*

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

Third Reading: *Matthew 11:25-30*

Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Offertory

An Offering will be collected during the singing of this hymn to benefit the Animal Welfare Society (AWS) of New Milford, an independent, 501 c(3) nonprofit, non-destroy animal rescue organization operating since 1965. If you write a check, please make it out to "St. John's Church" and mark "AWS" in the memo line. Thank you for your love and support!

AWS also welcomes gently used pet goods like soft-sided carriers, all sizes of crates, pet ramps and steps, feeding bowls, leashes, collars, grooming tools, clothing, etc. for their Thrift Shop.

Offertory Hymn # 400: “All Creatures of Our God and King”



1 All crea - tures of our God and King, lift up your voic - es, let us
 *2 Great rush - ing winds and breez - es soft, you clouds that ride the heavens a -
 *3 Swift flow - ing wa - ter, pure and clear, make mu - sic for your Lord to
 4 Dear mo - ther earth, you day by day un - fold your bless - ings on our
 5 All you with mer - cy in your heart, for - giv - ing o - thers, take your
 *6 And ev - en you, most gen - tle death, wait - ing to hush our fi - nal
 7 Let all things their cre - a - tor bless, and wor - ship him in hum - ble -



1 sing: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Bright burn - ing
 2 loft, O___ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! Fair ris - ing
 3 hear, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Fire, so in -
 4 way, O___ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! All flowers and
 5 part, O___ sing now: Al - le - lu - ia! All you that
 6 breath, O___ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! You lead back
 7 ness, O___ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! Praise God the



1 sun with gold - en beams, pale sil - ver moon that gen - tly gleams,
 2 morn, with praise re - joice, stars night - ly shin - ing, find a voice,
 3 tense and fierce - ly bright, you give to us both warmth and light,
 4 fruits that in you grow, let them his glo - ry al - so show:
 5 pain and sor - row bear, praise God, and cast on him your care:
 6 home the child of God, for Christ our Lord that way has trod:
 7 Fa - ther, praise the Son, and praise the Spi - rit, Three in One:



O praise him, O praise him, Al - le - lu - ia,



The refrain may be sung antiphonally, by phrase; all join in the final Alleluia.

The Prayers of the People

Officiant: God be with you.
People: ***And also with you.***
Officiant: Let us pray.

Officiant: O God, whose name is Love, you created this world and all that is in it. Look upon Your wild creatures which delight us by their variety and beauty. Be with them in their struggle for existence, and shelter them from the natural and man-made dangers that surround them.

People: ***Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Look upon the companion animals, O God, who share our homes and our lives, and who show us a love and loyalty few people can surpass. Bless them for the pleasure and companionship they give, and protect all those who suffer neglect and cruelty.

People: ***Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Look upon us, O God, with love and mercy. Forgive our selfishness and our cruelty and forgive us our bitterness against those who abuse Your creation, lead us gently back into Your way of love. Transform the hearts of all who, out of ignorance or malice, use creation with cruelty so that they may be filled with Your wisdom, love and mercy.

People: ***Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.***

We praise You for the creation of the world and all living creatures in the earth, sky, and sea. For the gentle eyes of the deer, the friendship of dogs, the purr of cats, the strength of bears, the beauty of a moose, the humor of otters, the grace of dolphins, the magnificence of whales. For the bond between all living creatures created by the same author, and for the memory of our kinship to the animal world kindled each time a rainbow appears.

People: ***We thank You most gracious God, for the beauty of the earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds***

and the liveliness of flowers, and for the wonder of Your animal kingdom. We praise You for these good gifts and pray that we may safeguard them for posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in grateful enjoyment of Your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of Your Name, now and for ever. Amen.

The Blessing of the Animals

*You are invited to bring your animals up to the priest
to receive a blessing.*

You may return to your place there afterwards.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis

Officiant: Together let us pray the Prayer of St. Francis

People: *Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

The Blessing

Officiant: God of manifold blessings, source of all that is good and true and holy, raise us up to see the world through your eyes so that we may treasure each blessed creature alive with your Spirit and touched by your creative hand; and may the blessing of this wonderful God Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier be upon us now and forever. **Amen**

Worship Ministers Today:

The Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Hahneman: *Officiant*

Tom Brand: *Organist & Choirmaster*

Laura Daly: *Reader*

MB Witt: *Altar Guild*

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

78 Green Hill Road
Washington, CT 06793

Parish Office Telephone: (860) 868-2527

Parish Office Hours: *Wednesdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.*

St. John's Email: stjohnschurch@snet.net

St. John's Website: <http://stjohnswashington.com/>

St. John's YouTube Page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoOwTnqIRss4BT8VwFul4gg>

Staff

The Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Hahneman, *Priest-in-Charge*

Tom Brand, *Organist & Choirmaster*

Dawn Rosiello, *Parish Administrator*

Joan Burgess, *Foundation Administrator*

Vestry

Mary Davis, Worth Bracken: *Wardens*

David Gillespie: *Treasurer*

Andris Kalnins: *Assistant Treasurer*

Justin Ormand: *Clerk*

Class of 2024

Rebecca Bent, Michael Del Nin, Susan McFeely

Class of 2025

Worth Bracken, Sara Coles, Andris Kalnins

Class of 2026

Laura Daly, Veronique Dulack, Justin Ormand

Diocesan Delegates: Sara Coles, MB Witt

Laura Daly: **Alternate**